GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1019
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Encouragement to Adolescent Scientists
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Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has conducted/proposes to conduct any programme for the encouragement of adolescent scientists to keep them connected with scientific activities during their education or after completing education;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor along with the future programmes/schemes proposed in this regard; and

(d) the time by which the said programmes/schemes are likely to be implemented?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EARTH SCIENCES
(SHRI.Y. S. CHOWDARY)

(a) & (b): Yes Madam. Department of Science & Technology, in the Ministry of Science and Technology, has been working with both the public sector and as well as the private sector to encourage adolescent scientists to keep them connected with scientific activities during their education and after completing education. In this endeavor DST has used several mechanisms and has launched numerous schemes, programmes and projects across the entire length and breadth of the country which are as follows:

(i) National Children's Science Congress (NCSC)

NCSC was launched in 1993 to encourage and engage school students in the age group 10-17 years in identifying various challenges in their localities/communities and find possible science and technology (S&T) solutions. Each year, about 500,000 students participate at the district level competitions across the country. The selected projects/models are then evaluated at the State level and the winners of the same at the National level. For the last five years, the winners of the National competition also get a chance to participate at the International level. In 2017, the Silver Jubilee year of NCSC will be celebrated and it would be the endeavor of DST to engage school students from almost all the districts of the country.

(ii) Initiative for Research and Innovation in Science (IRIS)

The Initiative for Research & Innovation in Science (IRIS) is a programme for empowering the next generation of innovators. IRIS aims to promote and nurture science and science research amongst young adolescent scientists. It is research-based science fair for adolescent scientists, which aims to inspire budding scientists in India. Each year, through its regional programme coordinators and senior scientists, IRIS reaches out to students, teachers and schools and encourages them to come up with research based science projects. Eminent jury comprising of scientists and domain experts then reviews these projects and the shortlisted entries are showcased in the National Fair. With the purpose of recognizing and rewarding outstanding projects, IRIS provides a platform for these talented adolescents to represent India at global science competitions like the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair (Intel-ISEF). So far, 84 projects of adolescent scientists from India have been showcased in ISEF and 43 grand awards, were won by them.

(iii) Science Express

To spread awareness about science amongst masses, particularly students & teachers, DST has been playing an activist role through one of the flagship initiatives namely Science Express, which has been travelling across the country since October 2007. It is an innovative science exhibition mounted on a custom-built 16 coach AC train, and has successfully completed 8 phases of journey which includes 4 phases as 'Science Express', 3 phases as 'Biodiversity Special' and recently concluded phase as 'Climate Action Special'. To indulge youth in fun-filled activities, games, and competitions, through which they easily understand fundamental concepts of science and mathematics, Science Express also has complementary activities that are conducted in its 'Joy-of-Science Lab', and on Railway platforms and also in schools located nearby. To facilitate this, a team of well trained communicators stays on board during the run of 6-7 months in each phase. This mega outreach program of DST has so far travelled more than 150,000 kms across the length & breadth of the country on the broad-gauge network of Indian Railway and received over 1.56 crore visitors at about 450 halts, several of these in remote, border and semi-urban areas. In addition, over 4000 article, news items, in newspapers, magazines, journals and huge coverage in electronic & digital media has brought it virtually to every nook & corner of India. It already has 6 entries in Limca Book of Records and in 2016 has been registered for six more records. It is also a shining example of partnership with public & private sector as agencies like Ministry of Railways, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate change, Department of Biotechnology, Central Electronics Ltd., and so on and BASF Ltd., HSBC Ltd., Petroleum Conservation Research Association, Indus

Tower, etc. also contributed to ensure maximum penetration of S&T in India.

(iv) Innovation in Science Pursuit for Inspired Research (INSPIRE)

INSPIRE through its five components i.e., INSPIRE Award, INSPIRE Internship, Scholarship for Higher Education (SHE), INSPIRE Fellowship and INSPIRE Faculty Award attracts talented students at their adolescent age, nurtures them to study science and pursue a career in research through providing mentorship, scholarship, fellowship, etc. during and after their education.

(v) Kishore Vaigyanik Protsahan Yojana (KVPY)

KVPY provides scholarship to the students for studying science at the undergraduate and up to the post graduate level, the International Olympiad provides international competitive exposure to the talented students.

(c) & (d): Do not arise.

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